MONMOUTH COUNTY PARK SYSTEM
GREEN HERITAGE
Now in its 50th Year...
The Newsletter of Monmouth County's Open Space, Parks & Recreation Agency
Vol. 50 No. 1 Spring 2016

The Best Things About Spring

Here's a seasonal treasure hunt with a twist. These springtime flora and fauna are less common (or at least the situations presented here are) and therefore harder to find in our parks. *Remember, times and locations are just guidelines, nature is delightfully unpredictable and subject to change.*

Finish This Statement: *The Early Bird...*

You don't have to set your alarm to see a robin during spring, but to see one feasting on worms is a rarer sight. Very common **throughout the parks,** the robin is now a year-round NJ resident.

Not-Your-Everyday-Flowering-Tree

Most people associate spring with the famously showy magnolia and cherry blossoms of April, but the flowering continues in May. The grand Horse Chestnut (aka Buckeye) with its veined and serrated palmate leaves (shaped like a hand) blooms in unlikely upright, light pink panicles–as if cotton candy tufts have sprouted from each branch. Visit the **Thompson Park Visitor Center and environs,** mid-May. Blink and you'll miss it! If you see these pink-centered petals lining the walkway or grass, you've come too late.

The Bluebird of Happiness

With a bright blue coat and sweet song, it's always a thrill (and also good luck) to spot a bluebird in your travels. Try the fields of **Huber Woods, Tatum and Thompson Park**.

Why They're Called 'Largemouth' Bass

Get your freshwater fishing license (ages 16-69), pick up some live shiners or a plastic worm in pumpkin, purple or black and head out to **Manasquan Reservoir or Thompson Park** this spring to hook a sample of this desirable species. Catch and release only from April 15–June 15 (all waters); keep your catch, within limits, the rest of the year. **www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/fishing_fresh**

Mountain Laurel's Colorful Cousin

From sphagnum bogs to pine forests, the deep pink Sheep Laurel can be found in southern county parks **(Shark River, Turkey Swamp and Manasquan Reservoir)** during June. Consult your memory of this flower's geometric shape from sightings of the more common, pale pink Mountain Laurel which is so abundant in Hartshorne Woods Park, there's a trail named after it.

Continued...

Fiddleheads Unfurl

The fronds (or branches) of the fern emerge from the soil with large round heads first, followed by stalks, in late April and May. The fiddleheads open later as the plant matures. This photo was taken along the Manasquan River stream valley at **Howell Park Golf Course** on Southard Ave.

Nothing Cuter Than a Kit

Super-watchable, these playful young foxes with their delicate, kitten-like faces, bright eyes and fluffy red fur are a sight as they scamper, frolic and roll around their den (just a hole in the ground) sunning themselves and socializing. **Thompson Park** staffers report multiple sightings over the past few years—these are some of their photos.

That's Not a Bird You Heard

One of the noisiest critters of spring in **Monmouth County** is also the tiniest—the Spring Peeper frog. Their cacophony of chirping starts in March and is frequently heard at night when all else is quiet. It is often mistaken for a large group of birds near freshwater bodies of water or marshes.

More Elegant Standing Still

The regal great blue heron is a well-known shorebird, frequently seen at the **water's edge in many parks**. We have many photos of this beautiful bird, standing in the water but only one as it's coming in for a landing, which offers quite a different view.

What's in the Name, Violet?

There are well over 500 species of viola (which also includes pansies), so it's no surprise this common flower shows up in colors beyond the classic purple after which it was named. The violet figures prominently throughout history and one species (*Viola soriria*) was chosen as the state flower of NJ. Start looking for this delicate spring bloom in April, along the banks of **Crosswicks Creek Park (Route 537)**.

A World of Flowers

As you might expect, there's a rainbow of blooms at **Deep Cut Gardens** each spring, so we've narrowed it down to just one color family here. In May, look for the purple lollipop-like allium and star-shaped clematis. In June, you can seek out the blueish lacecap hydrangea, an interesting variant of the more common blue hydrangea.

A Spring Show-Off

The common loon wears a drab coat during winter, but when spring comes along its breeding plumage is a show-stopper. This common waterfowl overwinters here, but doesn't stay to breed—so you will be lucky to see one. Reported sightings include the **Manasquan Reservoir**, **Fisherman's Cove** and Sandy Hook.

Snapping Turtle is a Sight Crossing Land

Usually found in and around freshwater ponds, this prehistoric-looking turtle will walk some distance to lay its eggs or relocate. While travelling on land, its head and legs stick out in a way that's hard to miss. Look for it in May at **Hartshorne Woods Park, Clayton Park, Manasquan Reservoir, or in the unexpected Popamora Point section of the Henry Hudson Trail** (where there's a freshwater wetland near the beginning of the trail).

Hominy Hill Golf Course

One Way to Spend a June Day

Golf course conditions are ideal this month, so head to the greens for a dose of the beautiful outdoors. Play a full or half round with friends or challenge yourself at our Summer Solstice tourney. Visit the driving range at **Hominy Hill, Howell Park and Charleston Springs** or get in a workout with a game of FootGolf.

Summer is Coming!

Now is a good time to visit the beaches before the summer crowds. You will no doubt see plenty of shells, but the elusive sea-star is a real find. Keep your eye on the rocks and jetties, especially as the tide is going out. This one looks like it recently came ashore just to pose for this photo.

COUNTY GRANTS AVAILABLE TO HELP *YOUR TOWN* FUND LOCAL PARK PROJECTS

The Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant Program was started in 2003 to help municipalities fund neighborhood park and recreation projects. It has grown into one of the most popular inter-governmental programs in Monmouth County. Since its inception, the Freeholders have awarded 171 grants, more than $26 million, to 47 of the county's 53 towns.

At a recent Monmouth County Freeholder's meeting, the Freeholders commented on its success to date. "It is a wonderful program," said Lillian Burry, "The Municipalities really go after the funding each year and we allocate $2 million annually for these cooperative projects." Freeholder Tom Arnone had similar thoughts, adding, "It is a great program. The communities in Monmouth County might not be able to complete these types of parks and open space projects without these grants."

This annual competitive matching grant program is funded by the County Open Space Trust Fund. Here's how it works.

- Each town may file one application per year, and is eligible for up to $250,000 in matching grants. Each town is responsible for paying a minimum of 50% of the total eligible project costs.
- State-designated Urban Aid Communities are responsible for a minimum of 25% of the total eligible project costs.
- Current application forms and the Policy and Procedures Manual (describing the application process) are available at www.monmouthcountyparks.com. Click Municipal Open Space Program.
- Questions may be directed to the Program Administrator at 732-842-4000, Ext. 4472.

2015 Grant Award Winners

Aberdeen	Veterans' Memorial Park Improvements – Phase 1	$250,000
Holmdel	Cross Farms Park Improvements	$137,000
Keyport	Main Street Park Development	$204,000
Little Silver	Improvement to Borough Fields	$121,000
Manalapan	Holiday Lake Park Pavilion	$13,000
Manasquan	Mallard Park Improvements - Phase 2	$39,000
Middletown	Croydon Hall Synthetic Turf Field	$201,000
Millstone	Clarksburg MEC-CRC Historic Preservation Project - Phase 1	$250,000
Neptune	Loffredo Field Improvements	$250,000
Red Bank	Mohawk Pond and East Side Park Improvements	$223,000
Rumson	Piping Rock Park Improvements - Phase 2	$137, 000
Wall	Municipal Complex Basketball Court	$175,000

Grants Make a Local Impact

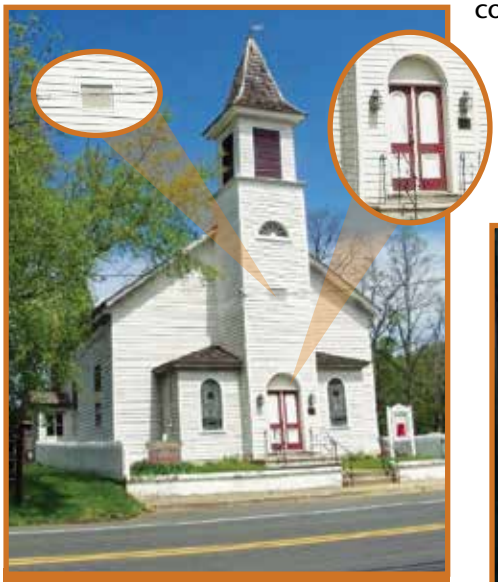
Municipal officials also speak enthusiastically about the grant program. Pat Butch, who is now a Monmouth County Recreation Commissioner but formerly served locally on advisory boards and councils in Millstone, expressed gratitude for the grants her town received. They helped bring along projects that may not have had all the funding needed in place. "This program definitely benefits the citizens of Monmouth County," she says. "It's a wonderful chance for people to have access to more parks and open space, and all the programs that take place in them."

Veterans Memorial Park Improvements; in Hazlet were completed in 2013 with help from this grant program.

Millstone Councilwoman Nancy Grbelja commented on the impact of this grant program on their latest project, preservation of the iconic Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church. The church building, owned by the Township, will be used as a community center. "This really is one of those projects that we would have a problem finding adequate funding for." She explained that the church needed some repairs before it could host the many programs and wonderful events planned.

Grant To Help Millstone Preserve a Piece of History

In 1844, when the local Methodist congregation decided to erect a church, David Bowman, a prominent local businessman and devout Methodist, spearheaded the movement. Another local businessman Charles Allen donated a plot of land and construction of the frame began. But, when the deed for the donated land was received, members noticed a clause stating that if the land ceased to be used as a church, the land and building were to revert to the owner. The original site was abandoned, and David Bowman instead donated a one acre plot of land for the church and burial ground on Route 524 at the western edge of the Village of Clarksburg (a community within Millstone).



The Clarksburg Church on Route 524 in Millstone was built in 1845.

View of the road from the front entrance vestibule.

The building was dedicated on November 1,1845 and went through a series of name changes through the years: Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church until 1958, then Clarksburg Methodist Church, and in 1968 to the Clarksburg United Methodist Church.

Then, in 1998, a group of Millstone residents restored the church and donated it to the Township. The structure was placed on the State and National Historic Sites Registries as a prime example of 19th century architecture of a small, rural Protestant church.

Sideview of the bell tower.

The church building has numerous original features including: beautiful period stained glass windows donated by founding families in the community, an original field stone foundation, the original exterior clapboard siding stained white, and a bell cast in 1892 and donated by Mrs. Charles Allen in honor of her husband. The louvered bell tower bears a steep pyramidal roof accentuated by flared eaves, copper trim and at its crest, an ornamental weather vane.

Well above the arched double-leaf-panel front door is a square, granite stone bearing the inscription “Clarksburg 1845 M. E. Church.” Another notable feature of the entry is its semi-circular transom, which matches the round-headed windows installed on each side of the vestibule.

Inside, it has great acoustic qualities and provides the ambiance of a 1800s historic structure as a gathering place for approximately 125 people. Seventeen-foot high plaster walls lead your eyes upward to the herringbone designed squares that form a unique ceiling.

The church was being used to host private small wedding and civil ceremonies, poetry events, music concerts and historical events until 2010 when structural deficits of the building became apparent and a new restoration effort was begun. The 2015 Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant of $250,000 will help fund the first phase of this new restoration effort, which includes structural repairs to the roof, exterior, walls, and floors.

A portion of the interior stained glass windows and herringbone ceiling are visible in this empty view of the main seating area of this converted-use church.

Townfolk fill the pews for an Edgar Allen Poe performance.

Young people in period costume welcome guests to the performance.

Deep Cut Gardens
Home Gardener

152 Red Hill Road
Middletown, NJ 07748

GS Parkway Exit 114, to Red Hill Road
732-671-6050

OUR FRIENDS, THE NATIVE BEES

Diane Allen, Park Horticulturalist

There was a time when all we asked of our garden was that it be attractive. With growing environmental concerns, however, we are beginning to expect more–particularly in view of declining monarch butterfly and non-native honey bee populations. Many of our native bees are also quietly struggling for survival, and for the same reasons: habitat loss, use of persistent pesticides, and pathogens. Although they don't make a surplus of honey we can enjoy, they are critical to our environment. It's worth a little effort to provide a supportive habitat in the residential setting, and this is the perfect time of year to do so.

Benefits of Native Bees:

1. They evolved in this area, and co-evolved with our native plants. They are well-suited to the environment and have established strong mutual relationships with our plants.

2. They work in cold and wet weather, when honeybees remain in the hive. They are excellent pollinators in early spring.

3. They visit more flowers than honeybees, and many have hairy bodies that carry more pollen.

4. They are good neighbors – since they don't have a hive to protect, they are quite docile, unlikely to sting unless seriously provoked.

5. Some have adaptations that make them particularly effective, and sometimes exclusive, pollinators of certain plants.

Some Bee ID Basics: The bumble bee (above) is a robust, hairy, black and yellow bee with hair atop its abdomen. Common eastern bumble bee photo by Joe Everhart. By contrast, the similar looking carpenter bee (left) has a shiny, black, hairless abdomen. The non-native honey bee, not pictured, is hairy and more slender than either.

Getting To Know More Natives: Mason & Leafcutter Bees

These closely related bees use leaves or mud in their nests, carry pollen on their abdomen (instead of "baskets" on their legs), and are solitary—that is, they tend to their own nests, rather than having a queen and workers. Even so, they like the company of other bees and may nest near each other.

The mason bee is an excellent pollinator of fruit trees, and is one of the few native bees managed by orchardists. It is also known as the blue orchard bee … or BOB, if you're on a first-name basis.

Emerging in spring just about when the redbud trees are blooming, mason bees mate and the females immediately go to work. Solitary but gregarious, the female mason bee works with mud to create brood cells in tunnels or tubes, such as hollow reeds or holes in dead trees. She will create a series of chambers, provisioning each one with pollen and nectar before laying a single egg in each.

The shiny blue orchard (mason) bee is on an apple tree. Source: Wikimedia commons.

The eggs hatch in summer and the larvae feed on the stored food. By September they have reached adulthood, but remain in their chamber until the following spring.

The clever mason bee can determine the sex of her offspring. She deposits female eggs in chambers towards the back, and a few male eggs near the open end before closing it off with mud. When spring warms the chambers, the males chew their way out first and, just like the human species, will have to wait for the females.

You can make it easier for a female mason bee to find a nesting site. Construct a bundle of tubes 6-8" long and approximately 5/16" in diameter using collected reeds, bamboo, flower stems, or tubes made of paper

or cardboard. The longer the tube, the more female eggs will be laid. Another option is a nesting block; a block of wood in which you have drilled the proper size holes to mimic those that might have been made by a beetle.

A home-made bundle of bamboo

Mason bee nesting block

Commercial bee tube products

The leafcutter bee is very similar in habit to the mason bee. But she utilizes circles cut from leaves to line her brood cells instead of mud. She prefers a slightly smaller tunnel, one about 1/4" in diameter. Emerging in May, leafcutters will use almost any deciduous plant leaf, but seem to prefer rose, ash, redbud and young maple leaves. The damage is of no consequence to the plant.

An example of the furry, black, striped leaf cutter. Note the the long hairs on her abdomen. Source:Wikimedia commons.

Evidence of leafcutter bee activity on a rosebush.

The Native Bumble Bee

The 'teddy bear' of the bee family, the bumble bee is often the first to appear in spring and the last to disappear in autumn. Only the young queens that hatched and mated the previous autumn will survive winter to start a new colony in the spring. Emerging from her winter burrow in the ground, she will seek out a nesting site in an old tree, abandoned mouse burrow or any sort of hollow.

Working alone at first, she will collect nectar and pollen and rear the first of many broods. As each brood hatches, they will become worker bees to forage for food and care for successive broods. Towards the end of summer, she will lay some eggs that will become drones (male bees) and next year's queens.

Bumble bee on a thistle. Note the pollen basket on her leg, only females collect pollen.

The bumble bee has a unique talent called "buzz pollination;" no other bee can do this. Clinging to a flower, the bumble bee will vibrate its flight muscles without moving its wings. The resulting vibration, at about the frequency of the musical note middle C, releases a burst of pollen that otherwise would not have been released. This is particularly effective for cross-pollination of blueberries, cranberries, tomatoes and peppers.

Bumble bees also have long tongues that enable them to feed from, and pollinate, some flowers that other bees cannot, such as larkspur and penstemon. They are among the few insects strong enough to open the closed flowers of our endangered native wildflower, bottle gentian.

Planning for Pollinators

Plant a variety of flowers to bloom from early spring until late fall. Native plants are usually best. Bees are unable to see red, but they are very attracted to yellow and blue. Although bees will visit many of the larger flowers, they delight in clusters of smaller flowers, such as the flowers of dill or the allium family (see page 3).

Try to keep your garden free of pesticides. This means you may have to search when buying new plants to find those that have been grown without the use of pesticides. An alternative is to start your own plants from seed … you'll have a much larger selection and it is less costly as well. If pesticides must be used, try to use organics, keep them away from blooming plants, and apply when bees are less active.

Provide shelter and nesting sites where practical by leaving a small pile of wood or stones, an old log, leaves, or a patch of bare ground, keeping plastic mulch or landscape cloth to a minimum.

Just a few modifications in plant selection and landscape management can make a big difference for our native pollinators. Of course, if you are allergic to bee stings, you should be more cautious around bees of any kind.

Continued next page...

Bee-Friendly!

Giant hyssop *(Agastache)* • New England Aster *(Aster novae angliae)*
Sheffield Daisy *(Chrysanthemum koreanum 'Sheffield')*
Goldenrod (*Solidago*) • Penstemon (*Penstemon digitalis*)
Purple coneflower (*Echinacea*) • Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Purple gay-feather (*Liatris*) • Sunflower (*Helianthus*) • Bee balm (*Monarda*)
Cosmos (*Cosmos*) • English lavender (*Lavandula*) • Zinnia (*Zinnia*)
Basil (*Ocimum*) • Borage (*Borago*) • Marjoram (*Origanum*)
Rosemary (*Rosmarinus*) • Sage (*Salvia*) • Thyme (*Thymus*)

Bee Balm

New England Aster

Sheffield Daisy

References, Research & Further Reading From the USDA Forest Service

"Pollinators" Available at: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/pollinator-of-the-month/megachile_bees.shtml and www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/pollinator-of-the-month/mason_bees.shtml

"Bee Basics: An Introduction to Our Native Bees" Available at: www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5306468.pdf

"Bumble Bees of the Eastern United States" Available at: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/BumbleBeeGuideEast2011.pdf

FREE SPRING EVENTS AT DEEP CUT GARDENS

NEW! Garden Ambassador Orientation/ Training

Saturday, April 16, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Do you enjoy interacting with visitors and spending time in a beautiful setting? Attend this session to learn about Deep Cut's special events and seasonal points of interest. Then, drop in to volunteer and become a welcoming, informative presence on the grounds. Please dress comfortably for a guided tour of the park. (Ages 18 and up.)

The Great Spring Perennial Plant Swap

Saturday, April 23,
Plant Intake 8:30–10 a.m.,
Swap 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

Bring perennial plants in 1-quart, 1-gallon or 2-gallon sized containers and exchange them for perennials of the same size. You may also exchange extra vegetable and herb seedlings. No ornamental annuals, please.

Earth Day Celebration

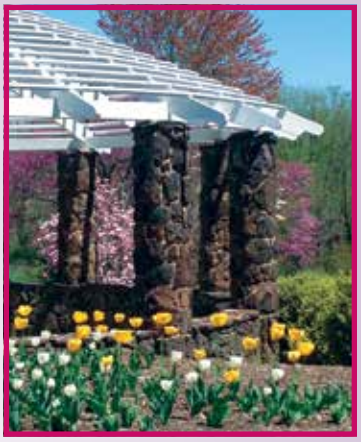
Sunday, April 24, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

Discover the park's floral beauty, hidden places, and native plants. Find out how to become an earth-friendly gardener and ways to compost.

National Public Gardens Day

Friday May 6,
2 p.m.–8 p.m.

Free activities for all ages. Join a guided tour or explore the gardens on your own, gardening/landscaping advice, earth-friendly garden tips, container gardening demo, and scavenger hunt.



Open House

Sunday, June 12,
10 a.m.–3 p.m.

A day of horticultural delights for the family – free guided tours, lectures, demonstrations, activities for children, gardening advice and more.

Volunteer Drop-in Days

Spring Clean-Up Week: Monday-Friday
April 4-8, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

Wednesdays and Saturdays 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
April 20 – October 26, 2016

Stop in to assist in the gardens on these dates and times. Work with our staff. New volunteers are always welcome. Call 732-671-6050 for information.

Early Spring "Magic" at Deep Cut

In lawn maintenance culture, a "fairy ring" is a disease, usually a ring or arc-shaped growth of fungi or dead/dying grass. But in old European folklore, the explanation is far more interesting…

These circular patterns were thought to be formed by magical forces in places where fairies or elves came to dance and celebrate, springing up where their feet touched the ground. Other cultures believed they were formed by dark forces such as shooting stars, witches, sorcerers or even the tail of a sleeping dragon. Legends hold that it is very dangerous to step into a fairy ring lest one be trapped there or borne into the fairy realm, and that young women collected fairy ring dew to use in love potions and to enhance their complexion.

Happily, not all legends have a dark connotation. Some associate the rings with good luck or the mark for a buried treasure (but, just like the leprechaun legend, you need the elf or fairy to claim the treasure).

Deep Cut's Fairy Ring

At Deep Cut Gardens, the fairy ring behind the greenhouse first 'appeared' in spring 2014 (after some laborious bulb planting the previous fall). The flowers now bloom in mid-March for a few weeks. The foliage ripens and fades before grass mowing begins. With satisfactory conditions, the flowers will multiply each year.

Here's how it was done:

- Scribe a circle using a stake, string and bottle of play sand.
- Dig holes along the circle approximately 4" apart with a bulb planter.
- Place a few crocus bulbs in each hole.
- Cover them with the plugs of soil removed.
- Mother Nature will take care of the rest.

IT'S TIME TO...

April ✓

- Work compost and manure into beds as soon as soil is friable. If you aren't composting, check out the Home Composting Demonstration Site and Horticultural Library at Deep Cut to learn more.
- Watch for weeds and pull them as they appear.
- Prune roses when the buds begin to swell.
- Before plants get too large, divide those that are crowding their neighbors and set out supports where needed.
- Set out hardy annuals such as pansies, violas and alyssum. Harden off plants started indoors or under cover.
- When applying granular fertilizer, make sure it does not contact plant foliage – it will burn.
- Overseed lawn; prepare poor spots by loosening soil. If using pre-emergent weed-killer, use early this month.
- Check out Deep Cut Gardens Perennial Plant Swap on Saturday, April 23, Plant intake 8:30 -10:00 a.m., plant swap 10 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Throwback:The Rose Garden in April 2006

May ✓

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs as soon as flowering is finished.
- Leave bulb foliage until it has died - green foliage is making food for next year's bloom.
- Chemical controls will be ineffective against grubs now; wait until Mid-July or August.
- Wait until the soil warms to transplant tomatoes and peppers.
- Transplant well-hydrated seedlings on a cloudy day or provide temporary shade. Pinching off flowers and buds now will encourage a stronger root system.
- Remove any finished cool weather crops to make room for warm season vegetables.
- Direct sow seeds outdoors for basil, beans and other warm-weather plants.
- Mulch plants to conserve moisture, stabilize soil temperature and reduce weeds.
- Acclimate houseplants to outdoor conditions and keep them in light shade.

Pansies in bloom, April - May

June ✓

- Continue to plant warm-weather flowers, vegetables and herbs. Water thoroughly before and after transplanting and mulch well with organic mulch.
- Check squash vines for borers and remove any you find.
- Keep after plants that need staking, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, tall annuals, dahlias and lilies.
- Save the date for the Deep Cut Gardens Open House, Sunday, June 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
- June 13-19 is Pollinator Week. Are your gardens and landscape pollinator-friendly?

Volunteers tend the gardens in June

NATURE CORNER

WATCHING WARBLERS: A BRIGHT SIGHT IN SPRING

Park Naturalist, Alison Astalos

One of the most exciting parts of the year for someone interested in birds is spring migration. Species that you haven't seen in a year will pass through as they travel up from their winter homes to their northern nesting grounds and many will be showing off their most colorful breeding plumage. In North America, warblers are among the most brightly-colored and beautiful birds you will find. Once you have caught a glimpse of one of these colorful little birds, it's hard not to want to find more.

Getting to Know You: Warbler Size & Habitat

Warblers are small, passerine birds, part of the family Parulidae, often referred to as Wood-warblers. Passerine species, more commonly known as songbirds, are distinguished by their ability to perch. There are 51 warbler species that can be seen in North America. They range in size from about 4 1/4 - 5 1/2 inches long. This is comparable to a Carolina Chickadee, a common feeder bird in Monmouth County. However, the Yellow-breasted Chat, the largest warbler, is 7 inches long, similar in size to a Northern Cardinal. Overall they have a slender body with short to average tail length.

Warblers are generally insectivores, using their short pointed bills to catch insects and pick caterpillars off leaves. Most warblers are arboreal (living in trees) and can be seen quickly flitting around the treetops as they forage the leafy canopy. However, three species are primarily terrestrial: the Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, and the Northern Waterthrush.

*The **Blue-winged Warbler** winters in Mexico and Central America, returning to Monmouth County in late April-early May to breed. They can be found nesting in open, shrubby areas near forest edges. Source: wikimedia commons*

Warbler Colors Explained

These active little birds vary in color from bright yellow to more subtle greens and browns. Some have distinct black and white patterns, while others have chestnut, orange, and red markings. Their color often reflects their habits and behaviors.

Birds that spend most of their time feeding or nesting on the ground will have more muted, tan and brown coloring while those found higher up in the trees are more brightly colored. Male and female warblers of the same species often differ greatly and can create a challenge when trying to identify them. As in other bird species, males in their breeding plumages are the most colorful, while females and non-breeding males can be plain and harder to distinguish.

If Not Sight, Then Sound

With a quick, active lifestyle high up in the trees, small size, and variations in plumage, warblers can be a challenge when it comes to identification. Listening to a warbler sing can be one of the best ways to locate and identify them. The best time to listen for warbler songs is during early spring and into the summer, while they are migrating to breeding grounds. Males will usually sing from a high perch in hopes of attracting a mate. Their songs are mostly high-pitched whistled notes or trills. Many species living high in the treetops have the highest-pitched songs, while those living on or near the ground have lower-pitched songs.

*In late April-early May you can expect to hear the "sweet sweet sweet sweeter than sweet" song of the **Yellow Warbler**. They are a common nester in the county often found in shrubby areas especially near water.*

***Prairie Warblers** migrate across the Atlantic from the West Indies and the Bahamas arriving in early May to their nesting grounds in Monmouth County. You'll often see them actively moving about feeding and bobbing their tail in brushy fields where they breed. Source: wikimedia commons*

Tools of the Trade: Binoculars & Bird ID Resources

Anyone interested in watching warblers will want a good pair of binoculars and a field guide. The Stokes Field Guide to Warblers written by Donald and Lillian Stokes is a great book to use when learning to identify Warblers. It is also helpful to become familiar with their songs. Listening to the Warbler section of The Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs, Eastern Region on CD will help you recognize basic songs and calls for these birds. There are also comprehensive online bird identification sites (containing visual descriptions, songs, maps, etc) such as the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search.

Once you have a general idea of what they look and sound like, you can practice searching for warbler species in the field. The best time is now—since there is no better viewing opportunity than spring migration. Grab some binoculars, head outside, and see how many warblers you can find!

References/Further Reading: Stokes, Donald and Lillian. Stokes Field Guide to Warblers. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2004.
Early, Chris G. Warblers of the Great Lakes Region and Eastern North America. Buffalo: Firefly Books, 2003
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_World_warbler www.wildbirds.com/identifybirds/birdfamilies/stoz/woodwarblers/tabid/414/default.aspx

*The **Northern Parula** is a common warbler found in the Monmouth County during migration. By the end of April, you can hear their buzzy ascending trill "zeeeeeeeee-yup" from the tops of the trees where they actively feed at the tips of branches.*

*The **Pine Warbler** is usually the first warbler to return to Monmouth County in early spring. They are even occasionally seen feeding at sunflower and suet feeders here in the winter. They breed in all kinds of pine trees and will commonly be heard and seen throughout the summer in and around them.*

*By early-mid April, you can look for the **Black-and-white Warbler** creeping along tree trunks and branches searching for insects in the bark crevices. Their song which sounds like a squeaky wheel can often be heard here in deciduous forests where they breed.*

*By the end of April, American **Redstarts** can be found breeding in our deciduous and mixed woodlands. They have a similar feeding habit to flycatchers, where they hover and catch insects. Often they can be seen fanning their tail, exposing the yellow or orange patches at the base.*

*While walking through the woods in mid-late April, there is a good chance you will hear the "teacher, teacher, TEACHer, TEACHER" song of the **Ovenbird**. This bird gets its name from the domed shaped nests they build on the ground resembling an old-fashioned oven. They are most often seen walking along the ground and fallen logs.*

*Arriving in early April, the **Louisiana Waterthrush** can be found during summer along wooded streams where they breed (the similar Northern Waterthrush generally breeds further north of New Jersey).*
Source: wikimedia commons

*By late April, the "wichety wichety wichety" song of the **Common Yellowthroat** can be heard as they return to nest. They tend to stay lower, feeding near the ground in underbrush, often popping up curiously to see what is going on.*
Source: wikimedia commons

GREEN HERITAGE

805 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ 07738-1695

Volume 50, No. 1 Spring 2016 G16082-2/16

PRSRT. STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MONMOUTH CO.
PARK SYSTEM

Spring...Coming To A Park Near You!

IN THIS ISSUE: Searching for Unusual Spring Sights; Grant Funding for Neighborhood Parks; Bees Have Knees (and so much more!); The Mighty, Flighty Warbler

Last year, daffodils, hyacinths and magnolia trees in bloom together at Deep Cut Gardens made for a very special display.